

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling for connecting together the ends of two pipes, comprising a tubular casing, having circumferentially extending end flanges projecting inwardly from ~~the~~ axial ends of the casing, a tubular sealing sleeve inside the casing, tensioning means for tightening the casing around the sealing sleeve, and ~~frusto-~~
~~conical~~ frustoconical gripping rings located within the casing at opposite ends of the casing, the inner edges of the gripping rings being formed with teeth, the casing comprising a strip of metal formed into a tube with a gap extending longitudinally of the casing between the free ends of the strip, the tensioning means interconnecting the free ends of the strip, the arrangement being such that when the coupling is placed around the ends of two pipes to be connected and the tensioning means are tightened, the casing presses the sealing sleeve against the pipe ends to form seals, ~~and forcing and~~
forces the teeth on the gripping ring to bite into the surface of the pipes to grip the pipes ~~characterized in that, wherein~~
the free ends of the strip are bent outwardly to form radially projecting flanges extending longitudinally of the casing on opposite sides of the gap, the two radially projecting flanges being placed between two reinforcing members which extend substantially the length of the coupling, the tensioning means passing through sets of aligned holes in the reinforcing members and the radially projecting flanges, the reinforcing members each having an angled cross-section, a web portion through which the holes for the tensioning means pass, and a

reinforcing member flange ~~running~~ extending along the longitudinal edge of the web portion that is nearer to the axis of the coupling, the reinforcing member flange ~~of the reinforcing member~~ bearing against the tubular portion of the casing.

11. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 10 in which each said reinforcing member has a channel-shaped cross section with reinforcing member flanges ~~running~~ extending transversely along both longitudinal edges of the web portion.

12. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 10 in which there are two sets of the aligned holes and the tensioning means comprise two screw bolts and nuts, and said web portion is in surface-to-surface contact with a planar surface of said radially projecting flange.

13. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 11 in which there are two sets of the aligned holes, the tensioning means comprise two screw bolts and nuts and the heads of the screw bolts and the nuts bear against the web portion when the tensioning means are tightened.

14. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 12 in which each said reinforcing member has a channel-shaped cross section with reinforcing member flanges extending along both longitudinal edges of the web portion, and the nuts are of a size that fits between the sides flanges of the each said reinforcing member so as to prevent rotation of the nuts.

15. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 12 which is arranged ~~such~~ so that, as the bolts are tightened, the radially projecting flanges ~~can be~~ drawn together, thereby ~~applying~~ causing the tubular casing to

apply radially compressive force~~forces~~ to the ~~easing~~sealing sleeve and the gripping rings.

16. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 10~~-in which~~, wherein the aligned holes are elongated in the radial direction.

17. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 10 ~~in which~~including a ~~backing rings~~ring ~~is~~ provided inside the casing adjacent ~~each~~ a respective said gripping ring between the gripping ring and the sealing sleeve to prevent the sealing sleeve from bulging between the teeth of the gripping ring.

18. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 10 ~~in which~~including an inner sleeve ~~is~~ provided inside the sealing sleeve to prevent the sealing sleeve from bulging inwardly between the pipe ends.

19. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 10~~-in which~~, wherein the outer ends of the radially projecting flanges are bent back in a transverse direction to form planar stiffening flanges along the longitudinal outer edges of the radially projecting flanges.

20. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 19~~-in which~~, wherein the radially projecting flanges are bent back at right angles.

21. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 11~~-in which~~, wherein there are two sets of the aligned holes and the tensioning means comprise two screw bolts and two nuts.

22. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 13~~-in which~~, wherein the nuts are of a size that fits

between the ~~sides~~flanges of the reinforcing member so as to prevent rotation of the nuts.

23. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 13 which is arranged ~~such~~ so that, as the bolts are tightened, the radially projecting flanges ~~can be~~are drawn together thereby ~~applying~~causing the casing to apply radially compressive ~~force~~forces to the ~~casing~~sealing sleeve and the gripping rings.

24. (Currently amended) A pipe coupling according to claim 14 which is arranged ~~such~~ so that as the bolts are tightened, the radially projecting flanges ~~can be~~are drawn together thereby ~~applying~~causing the casing to apply radially compressive ~~force~~forces to the ~~casing~~sealing sleeve and the gripping rings.

25. (New) A pipe coupling for connecting together pipe ends, comprising:

a tubular casing comprising a strip of metal formed into a tube with a gap extending longitudinally of the casing between free ends of the strip, the free ends of the strip being bent outwardly to form opposing spaced radially outwardly projecting flanges that extend longitudinally outwardly on opposite sides of the gap, the radially projecting flanges including through holes adjacent the free ends thereof extending therethrough, said tubular casing further comprising inwardly extending end flanges projecting inwardly at axial ends of the tube of said tubular casing;

a hollow generally tubular sealing sleeve located inside the casing for receiving ends of pipes therein;

frustoconical gripper rings located within and at opposite ends of the casing and having inner edges formed with teeth;

a pair of reinforcing members separate from the tubular casing and having a length substantially the same as a longitudinal length of said projecting flanges of said tubular casing, each said reinforcing member including a web portion with transverse through holes extending therethrough for placement substantially in alignment with the through holes of said respective outwardly projecting flanges when said reinforcing members contact with said projecting flanges on opposite sides of the gap, said reinforcing members each including a reinforcing member flange extending along a longitudinal edge of said web portion that is nearest to the axis of the coupling so that the longitudinal edge of said web portion and said reinforcing member flange at the longitudinal edge bear against a region on an outer surface of said tube of said tubular casing; and

a tensioning arrangement for placement through the aligned through holes of said web portions and said outwardly projecting flanges for interconnecting the free ends of the opposing spaced radially outwardly projecting flanges and for moving said flanges toward each other to tighten said tubular casing around said sealing sleeve,

wherein, when the coupling is placed around the ends of two pipes to be connected and said tensioning arrangement is tightened, said tubular casing presses said sealing sleeve against pipe ends to form seals and forces the gripping rings to grip the respective pipe ends.

26. (New) A pipe coupling according to Claim 25, wherein a planar surface of said web portion of each said reinforcing member is configured for surface-to-surface contact with a planar outer surface of a respective said radially outwardly projecting flange.

27. (New) A pipe coupling according to Claim 25, said coupling further comprising a bridging member for spanning the longitudinal gap.

28. (New) A pipe coupling according to Claim 25, wherein said sealing sleeve comprises a sealing gasket having sealing lips formed near each end thereof.

29. (New) A pipe coupling according to Claim 28, including a steel inner sleeve for placement within a smooth middle portion between said sealing lips within said sealing gasket.

30. (New) A pipe coupling for connecting together ends of two pipes, comprising:

a tubular casing formed into a tube with a gap extending longitudinally of the casing between free ends of the strip, the free ends of the strip being bent outwardly to form opposing radially outwardly projecting substantially planar flanges that extend longitudinally outwardly on opposite sides of the gap, the radially projecting flanges including through holes adjacent the free ends thereof and extending therethrough;

a hollow generally tubular sealing sleeve located inside said tube of said tubular casing for receiving ends of pipes therein;

frustoconical gripping rings located within and at opposite ends of said tube of said tubular casing;

a pair of reinforcing members dimensioned for extending along a longitudinal length of said projecting flanges of said tubular casing, each said reinforcing member including a web portion having a planar surface with transverse through holes extending therethrough, said reinforcing members configured for placement substantially in alignment with the through

holes of said respective outwardly projecting flanges when said web portion of each said reinforcing member is placed into surface-to-surface contact with the planar surface of a respective said projecting flange, said reinforcing members each including a reinforcing member flange extending along a longitudinal edge of the web portion that is nearest to the axis of the coupling so that at least a part of at least one of the edge of said web portion and the adjacent edge of said reinforcing member flange contact a region on an outer surface of said tubular casing; and

a tensioning arrangement for placement through the aligned through holes of said web portions and said outwardly projecting flanges for interconnecting the free ends of the opposing radially outwardly projecting flanges and for moving said outwardly projecting flanges toward each other for tightening said tubular casing around said tubular sealing sleeve.